

A man in a military uniform stands in a museum exhibit. He is wearing a brown jacket and khaki pants, and is smiling while saluting. A metal helmet hangs from a scale above him. A thick rope is visible on the left side of the image.

ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES
CHOTTO XENOS

AKRAM KHAN COMPANY

At home Activities

These activities have been designed to engage children of all ages to explore the historical context behind *Chotto Xenos*. They are just suggestions that we feel support the themes in *Chotto Xenos*, but please feel free to take them and adapt them for your family.

The Key Questions (questions in bold) are suggested to help start the discussions around the themes of *Chotto Xenos*. Displaying the questions with the correlating activities might help to spark conversations.

Light historical context

This interactive resource was created to give families the opportunity to think about the history of soldiers from colonised nations before they see *Chotto Xenos* on stage. It explains some of the historical context behind the show in a child-friendly way.

Explore the Prezi, [here](#).

Image Bank

A powerpoint with images of colonial soldiers from WWI can be found [here](#).

FOR CHILDREN TO DISCUSS, MAKE & MOVE

1. Flags of Empire

Where did the soldiers from colonised nations come from?

This craft activity that can be tailored depending on resources and allows families to explore the different countries that were once ruled by the British Empire and summoned to fight for Britain and the allies in the First World War.

Key questions to discuss could focus on what countries were involved, prompting children to investigate and imagine what these places were like then and now.

Instructions:

1. Cut out flag shapes or use A5 card.
2. Have the different flags (either pre-made or on a screen/print out) on display for reference. Download the Powerpoint [here](#) for guidance.
3. Flags can be coloured in to represent the different countries that fought under the British Empire or decorated by scrunching up different coloured tissue paper and other mixed media and gluing it to the A5 card.
4. Decorated flags can be hung as bunting.

2. Playdough People

What shapes us and how do we shape ourselves?

In the performance we see a man created by giant hands. Using playdough or clay, invite children to create themselves and/or members of your family. It could just be faces, or all bodies. It could also be what different family members represent instead of literal people.

How do we build and shape our families? How did your family sculpt and shape you? How do we build and shape our identity? What else builds and shapes our identity?

3. Medal Making

How do we remember and honour the sacrifices soldiers from colonised nations made?

Although a few colonial soldiers were awarded medals after the war, many were not recognised for their bravery and have been forgotten by history. *The 70,000 Black South Africans of the Native Labour Corps did not receive the British War Medal, while their white officers did.*

This activity allows children to think about the sacrifices of soldiers from across the British Empire and places importance on their individual country rather than fighting under Britain.

Instructions:

1. Cut out card shapes (stars, rectangles, circles) to create the medallion.
2. Wrap shapes in silver and gold foil and then decorate with other craft materials.
3. Using either coloured ribbon, felt or card, cut out strips that correspond with the flag of the country chosen. Families can choose any country they like to represent. Maybe there is a country they have a connection with or maybe there is a country that they were surprised to learn was involved in WW1.
4. Stick these coloured strips on to a rectangular piece of card to create the medal ribbon.
5. Carefully attach a safety pin to the top of the ribbon using sellotape.
6. Using glue or tape, attach the medal to the ribbon. The finished medals can be hung as garlands or worn by your children.

Materials needed:

- Silver and gold foil
- Card cut into shapes
- additional craft materials for decorating (sequins etc)
- Card to secure ribbons
- Materials to make ribbons e.g felt, card or ribbon in the colours of different flags from the Powerpoint
- Safety pins
- Sellotape and glue
- Scissors



4. Basic Training

Fun warm up, introduction to moving, exploring army movements

This quick fire game explores the movement of soldiers in training. Once children are familiar with these movements, they can explore and develop their own movements based on the life of soldiers.

Explain to your children that all soldiers need to do their training. You expect them to follow your orders with careful listening and lots of energy. Introduce each action and see how many they can remember as you call them out and they respond.

Ideas of actions to call:

1. March: high knees, swinging arms (inclusive - travelling).
2. Quick March: same as above but faster.
3. Army crawl: travelling low to the ground, e.g. shuffling on stomach (inclusive- low down movements).
4. Take cover: duck/shield.
5. Squad: make a line.
6. Clean boots: on one knee, mime buffing one shoe, jump up and then jump down to do the other knee (Inclusive - 'find a way to clean your uniform').
7. Dig: Digging movements with arms, imagining the soil is very heavy and difficult to move.
8. Retreat: moving backwards without bumping into anything.
9. Camouflage: stealthily creeping on a medium to low level.
10. Barbed wire: Imagine you have to go over and under sharp wire without touching it.
11. Halt: Freeze.
12. Air aces: Arms outstretched to create aeroplane wings, move around the room at different levels, tilting the body to change direction.
13. Detonate: Large overarm throwing motion, hands over ears, face away and duck. Three actions performed quickly in a sequence before travelling to another point in the room and repeating.

Some additional actions if you have a larger group:

1. Drill: get into groups of 5 with one person in the middle, move around the space in this group.
2. Battle!: (find a middle point in the room and create two lines opposite each other).
3. Trenches: in three's, two make an arch using their arms. The third person stands in the middle of the 'trench' on look out.

Ask your children for more suggestions to create their own movements. Once they've got the hang of these actions call them quicker and quicker and encourage children to perform them as big as they can, as low as they can, as far as they can, etc.

What do you think training for soldiers would have been like? What made it difficult? How did you feel being given orders?